

Land Use Framework

Overview

Downtown's Evolution

Like so many other American cities, Lincoln's downtown once was a thriving mixed-use community of department stores, restaurants, specialty shops, offices, theaters, educational facilities and residences. But social, political and economic changes following World War II brought about momentous shifts in the character of downtown and its role in the community.

Rather than remain a flourishing mixed-use area, downtown witnessed the flight of major retail uses and office facilities to outlying areas. While faced with such challenges, downtown was able to retain a generous complement of governmental and private sector office uses, theaters and entertainment venues, educational institutions, support services, and all-important cultural and historic assets.

An Opportunity for Revitalization

Starting in the late 1990s, Lincoln, has begun to experience positive changes, and will continue to be reshaped by emerging social, cultural, recreational and life-style trends that indicate a renewed interest in downtowns.

Driving these changes are two major demographic groups: the "baby boomer" generation who are now "empty-nesters" (parents with grown children), and a new generation of young adults seeking a more urban rather than suburban lifestyle.

With these constituencies to tap into, the downtown has an opportunity to enjoy the success of this imminent urban transformation - and to be again what it historically has been: a thriving mixed-use community.

Realistic and Achievable

The intent of the Land Use Framework is to provide a practical, proactive guide outlining development patterns that attract both new users and maintain and strengthen existing desirable uses.

The framework is realistic and achievable. It considers and meets the market outlook for Lincoln over the next twenty years identified in the *Long Term Market Analysis and Preliminary Retail Strategy* prepared by Economics Research Associates (ERA).

To meet this market outlook, the Land Use Framework responds to the following essential requirements:

- Development sites meet proven fundamental real estate needs for housing, employment, retail and parking.
- Build upon downtown Lincoln's greatest assets: its historic buildings, and districts which ought to be preserved and renovated wherever feasible.

Long-range Plan

In some situations, new uses are identified for parcels that already are occupied by a viable use. In these special cases:

- **Existing uses are "grandfathered"** – Businesses and uses of a site may remain and operate for as long as they wish; if the property changes hands, the new owner may continue the existing use.
- **New parks and open spaces must be acquired** – Existing parcels designated as new open space must be purchased by a public entity or developer, or transferred to public use by easement, dedication or other means.

Over time, of course, change in downtown Lincoln is inevitable. The Land Use Framework is an assembly of land uses that creates a unified and coherent whole - a place where people will want to live, work, shop and play.

Land Use Framework

The Land Use Framework designates recommended land uses for downtown Lincoln parcels, identifying a total of some 15 different uses in downtown.

A Mix of Uses

The framework encourages mixed use development wherever feasible. Mixed-use buildings with housing on upper floors support the retail uses on their ground floors, and benefit from nearby transit services.

When parcels contain a vertical mix of uses, the color shown on the Land Use Framework typically indicates the predominant or most important ground floor use; or in some cases, as with parking structures or housing, the predominant use can be the upper

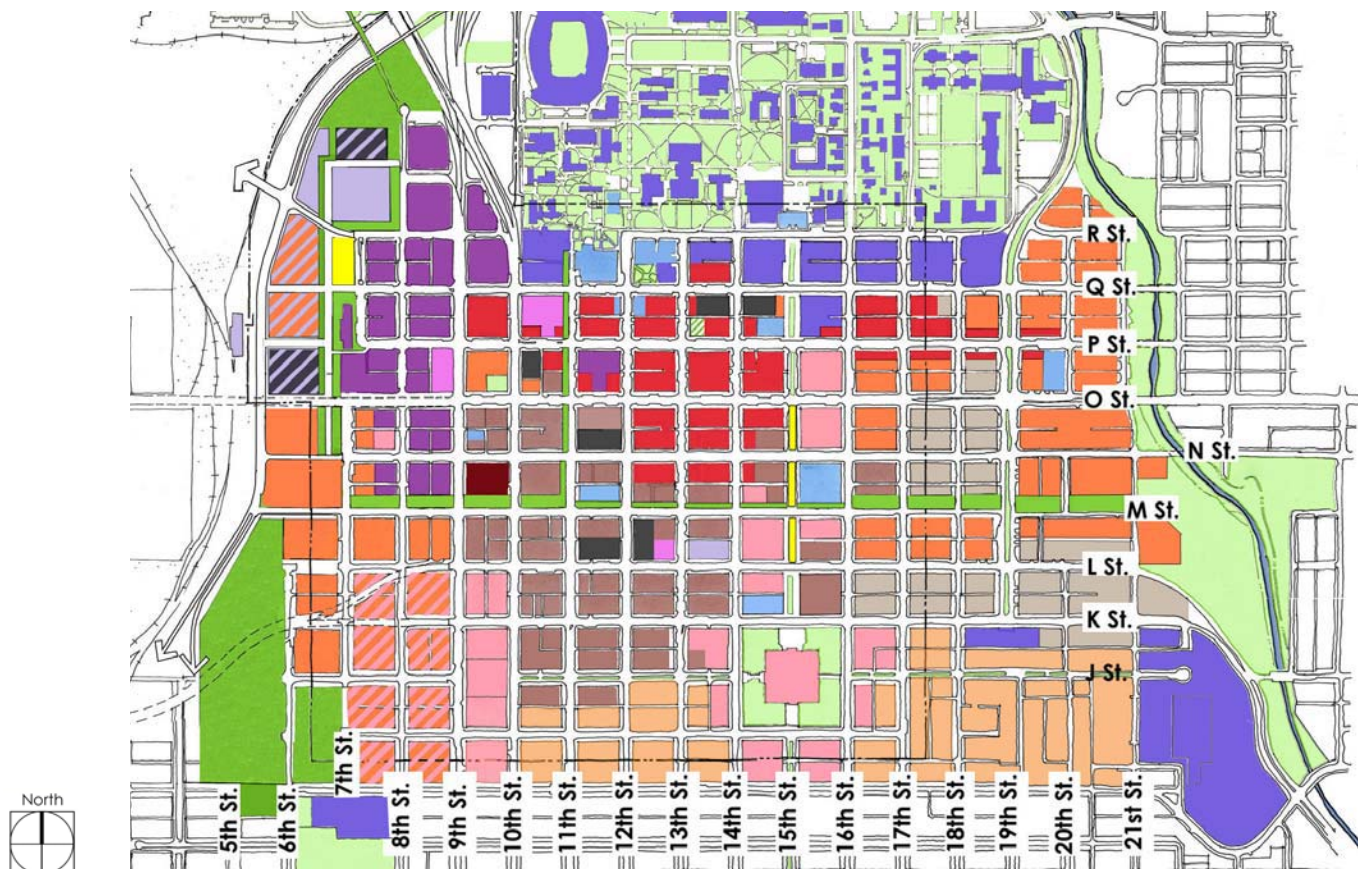
floors which make up the bulk of the building, even when ground floor uses differ.

These land uses are separated into individual frameworks and described in the pages that follow.

Land Use Framework Key

- Retail
- Marketplace
- Restaurant/Entertainment
- Office
- Government
- Low Rise Office
- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Education
- Arts/Cultural
- Civic/Convention/Arena/Conference
- Festival/Event Spaces
- Civic Square
- New Parks and Open Space
- Existing Parks and Open Space
- Parking Structure

(Colors indicate predominate land use, as described in text above.)



Land Use Framework

Retail Framework

Retail Revitalization

Downtown market demand (as measured in the ERA market analysis mentioned in the land use framework overview) indicates significant retail development potential within the study area, over the next twenty years.

The demand warrants a “three-pronged” retail development strategy defining three distinct types of retail uses:

- **Retail Core** – including primary and secondary retail
- **Dining and Entertainment Retail**
- **Marketplace Retail** – neighborhood-oriented.

These types are described in detail on the pages that follow.

Retail Fundamentals

Each of the three retail types makes up a separate retail framework or district, distinct from and yet complementary to the others. While they differ, each type must meet the same fundamental physical configurations and requirements to attract investors, developers and tenants. Each must be:

- **Compact and walkable** – approximate distance of a five-minute walk.
- **Street-oriented and active** – retail uses should be located so that they activate ground floors of buildings on both sides of the streets.
- **Served by adequate parking** – especially by adjacent on-street parking.
- **Highly visible** – exposed to sufficiently high volumes of pedestrian and auto traffic.



Retail Framework

Retail Core

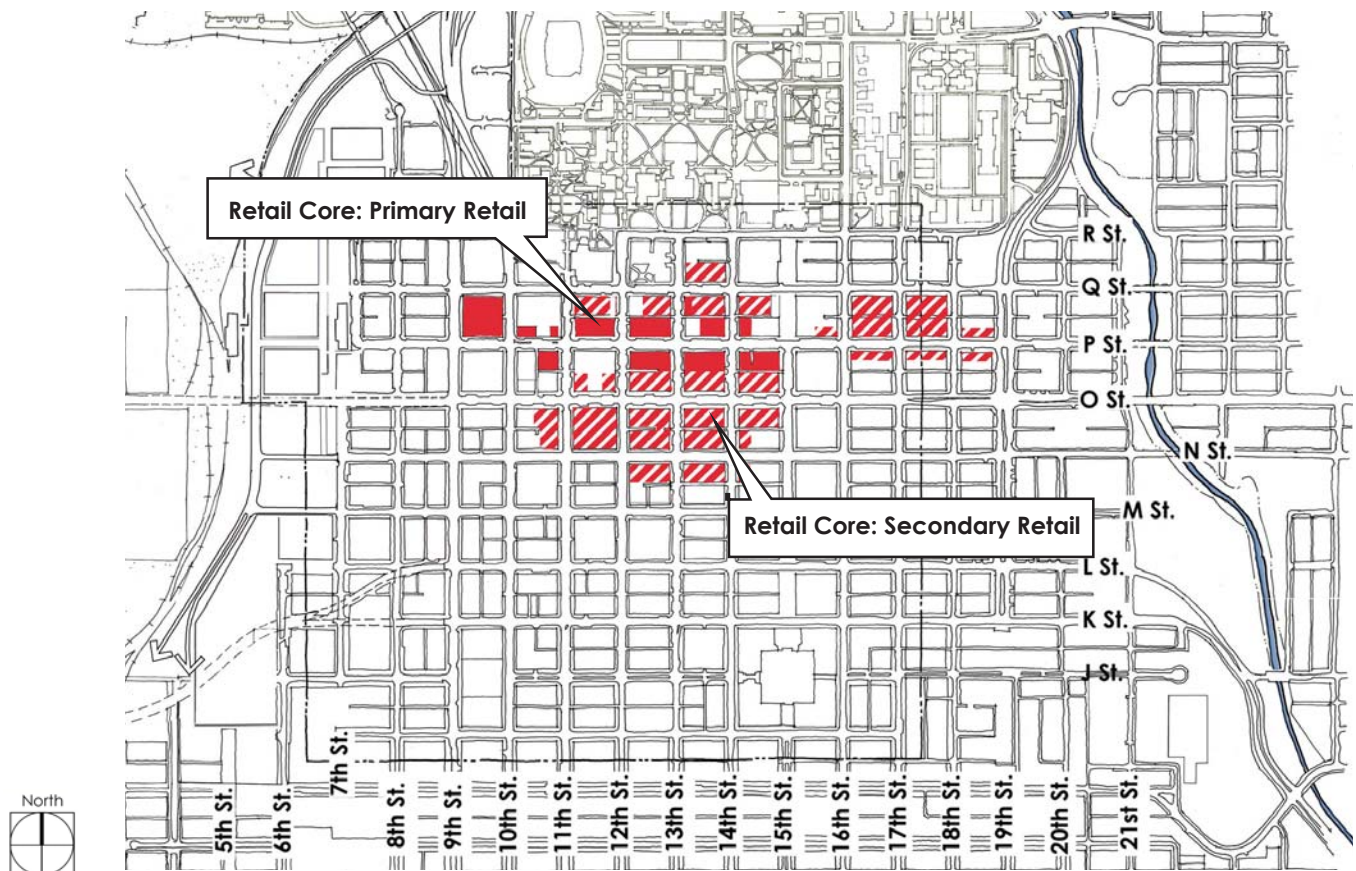
The retail core consists of two basic categories, primary and secondary retail. These are mutually dependent and supportive, with similar yet somewhat different characteristics and requirements. Each is summarized below and described in more detail on the pages that follow.

Primary Retail

The primary retail core must support a high level of pedestrian activity throughout the day and night, and therefore *requires continuous edge-to-edge retail land uses*. Retail fundamentals – the Essential Retail Development Standards – must be adhered to rigorously on these properties, and are discussed in further detail later in this section.

Secondary Retail

Street-level retail activity is desirable but not necessary to generate adequate vitality on secondary retail streets. Thus these secondary retail blocks *allow commercial uses to be mixed in with retail uses at the ground floor*; for instance, a bank or hair salon could be next to a restaurant or clothing shop.

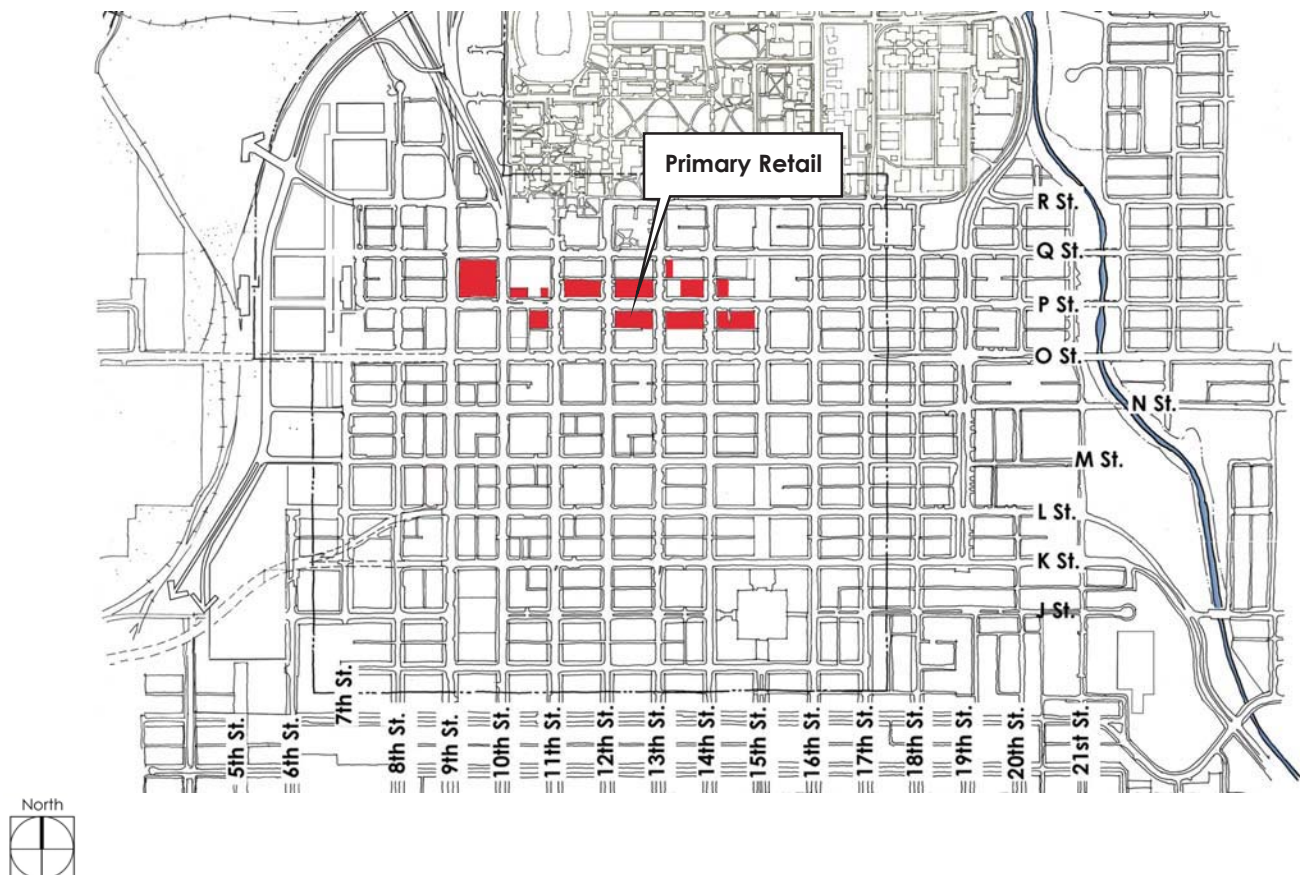


Retail Core Diagram

Primary Retail

While the P Street corridor is planned as the primary retail area in downtown, this has not historically been the case. In fact, O Street was downtown Lincoln's retail core for decades. However, its strength has eroded over the years, and P Street has replaced it in prominence for a number of reasons:

- **Traffic volume** – P Street has a high but not excessive volume of auto traffic, whereas O Street traffic renders it less conducive to pedestrians and street-oriented primary retail.
- **Edge-to-edge retail** – is more extensive on P Street than on O, where significant non-retail uses have, over time, been developed and thus eroded the potential for required ground floor edge-to-edge retail.
- **Recent retail investment** – P Street has seen significant retail investment over the last ten years and is now widely viewed as the primary retail street. Most recently the Douglas Grand Theater opened on P Street with a potential of up to one million patrons per year. This use serves as a significant attraction and catalyst for adjacent retail development.
- **Linkage** – P Street provides a direct connection to the historic Haymarket District.



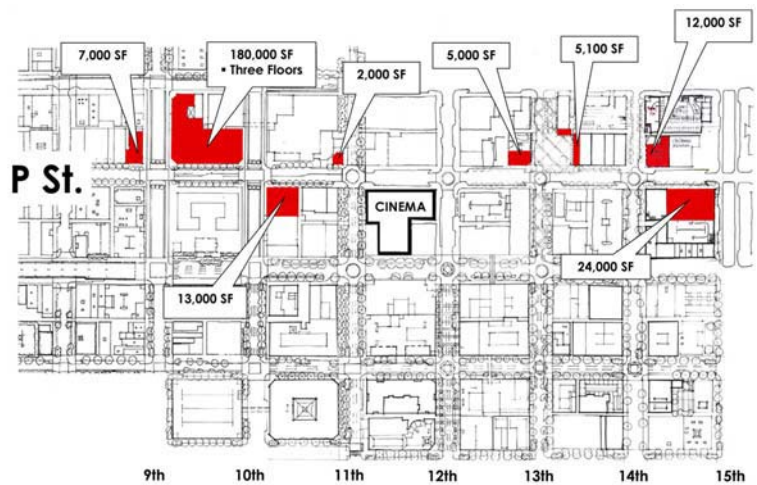
Primary Retail Diagram

P Street

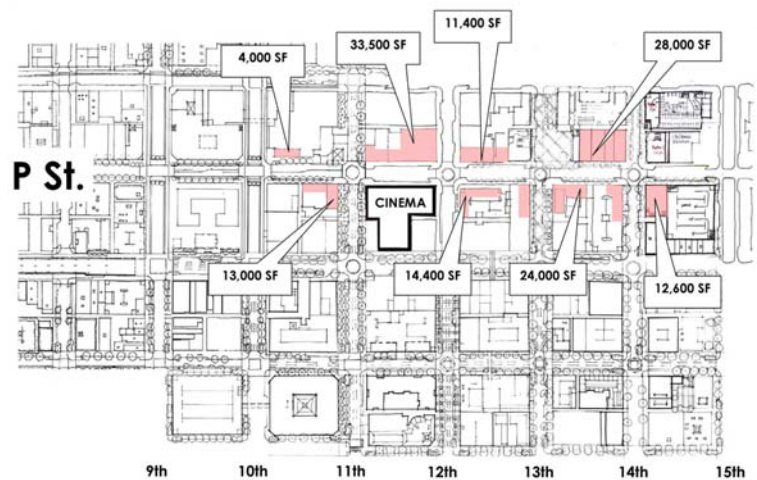
Market demand analysis projects primary retail development over the next twenty years will require 300,000 to 350,000 square feet of new, renovated and improved existing retail space. To meet this demand and to maintain momentum established by the Douglas Grand Theatre, additional retail sites should be developed over time.

Key Sites and Actions

- **Journal Star Building** – The redevelopment of this site, viewed by developers and retail specialists as the “best” retail site in downtown, will be crucial.
- **Nebraska History Museum** – redevelopment would occur only after an alternate site along the Centennial Mall for relocation and expansion of the facility can be identified and built.
- **Parking structures** – “parker-friendly,” retail-supportive parking should be constructed. (See Parking Framework.)
- **Convert non-retail uses** – existing storefront non-retail uses should be replaced, to create a continuous and uninterrupted retail frontage.



Primary Retail - 20-year forecast



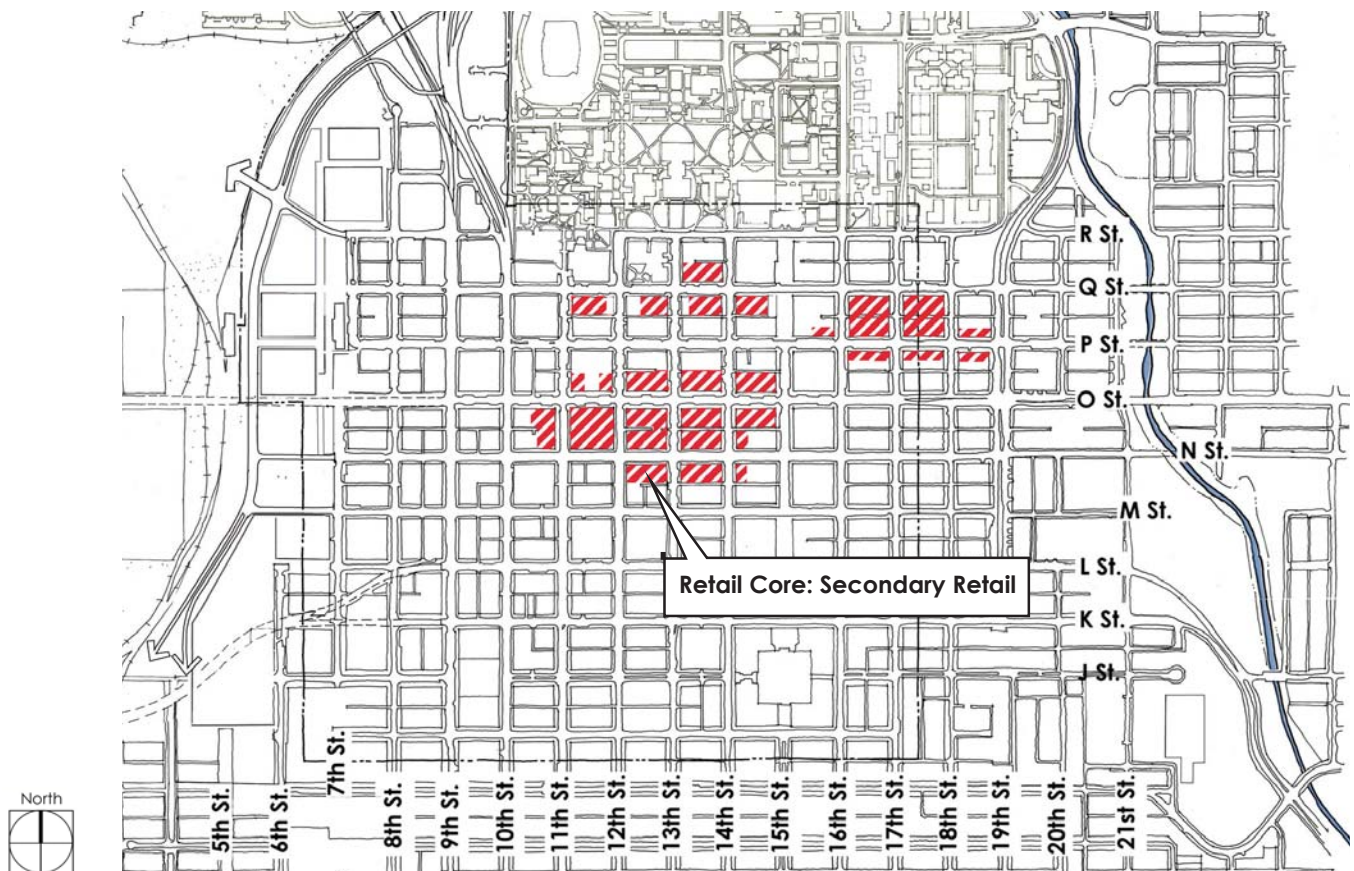
Secondary Retail - 20-year forecast

Secondary Retail

Retail and commercial uses should be developed along ground floors of parcels on O Street (between 11th and 15th), parts of N Street (again between 11th and 15th), and P Street (between 15th and 19th). These locations are indicated on the diagram below.

Secondary retail uses are proposed for those blocks because they have:

- **Existing retail, entertainment and commercial uses** – where these activities already occur, street frontages would be strengthened by being “filled in” with further supporting uses.
- **Destination uses** – for instance, photocopy or printing shops, drugstores, restaurants or office supply stores – uses that may benefit from high traffic volume exposure on O Street but do not need a strong pedestrian orientation.



Secondary Retail Diagram

Dining/Entertainment

The historic Haymarket District currently provides the greatest concentration of dining and entertainment uses in the Lincoln downtown. The retail framework builds off the existing strength of this district, and its lively and popular restaurants, night clubs, art galleries and specialty shops.

Market analysis anticipates that over the next twenty years 100,000 to 150,000 square feet of additional dining and entertainment uses could be added to downtown. Locations identified for likely expansion include:

- **8th Street** – the emerging south Haymarket District, extending southward from the Harris Overpass.
- **New arena and convention center neighborhood** – adjacent to these large redevelopment sites.

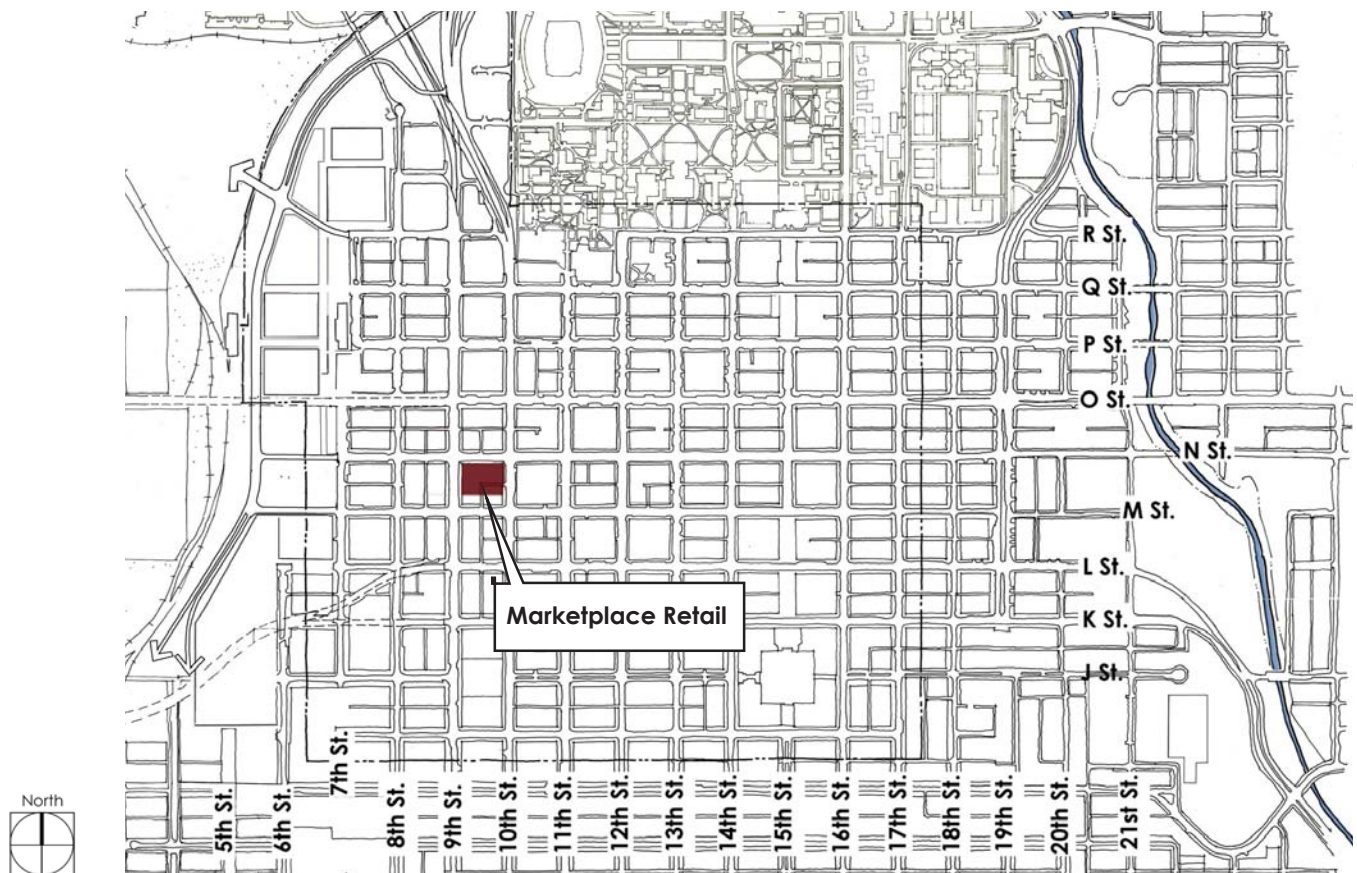


Entertainment/Dining Diagram

Marketplace Retail

A new “urban-style” neighborhood marketplace would be developed to serve both downtown and anticipated new housing, especially that planned for the south Haymarket District. The marketplace retail development should provide:

- **100,000 SF of retail** – to meet the demand for neighborhood-serving retail uses anticipated by 2025.
- **Pedestrian-orientation** – with a majority of shop fronts oriented to engage the street.
- **Support for local businesses** – complementary neighborhood uses to strengthen existing small retail, restaurants, commercial and art gallery development currently existing on 9th and 10th Streets and other nearby streets.
- **Anchor grocery store** – a full-service neighborhood grocery store would be a hub for residential and commercial development.



Marketplace Retail Diagram

Essential Retail Development Standards

It is often said that retail development is the hardest part of any kind of development project to “get right.” With this in mind, conditions affecting successful pedestrian-oriented retail development have been examined by the retail development industry and applied to shopping malls and “lifestyle centers”—the very competition that downtown Lincoln now grapples with.

Historic Main Streets

Essentially, these principles and requirements resulted from the experiences of main street merchants in historic downtowns over the first half of the 20th Century. With the demise of the traditional main street, however, these fundamentals have been forgotten in downtown Lincoln.

Retail Development Standards

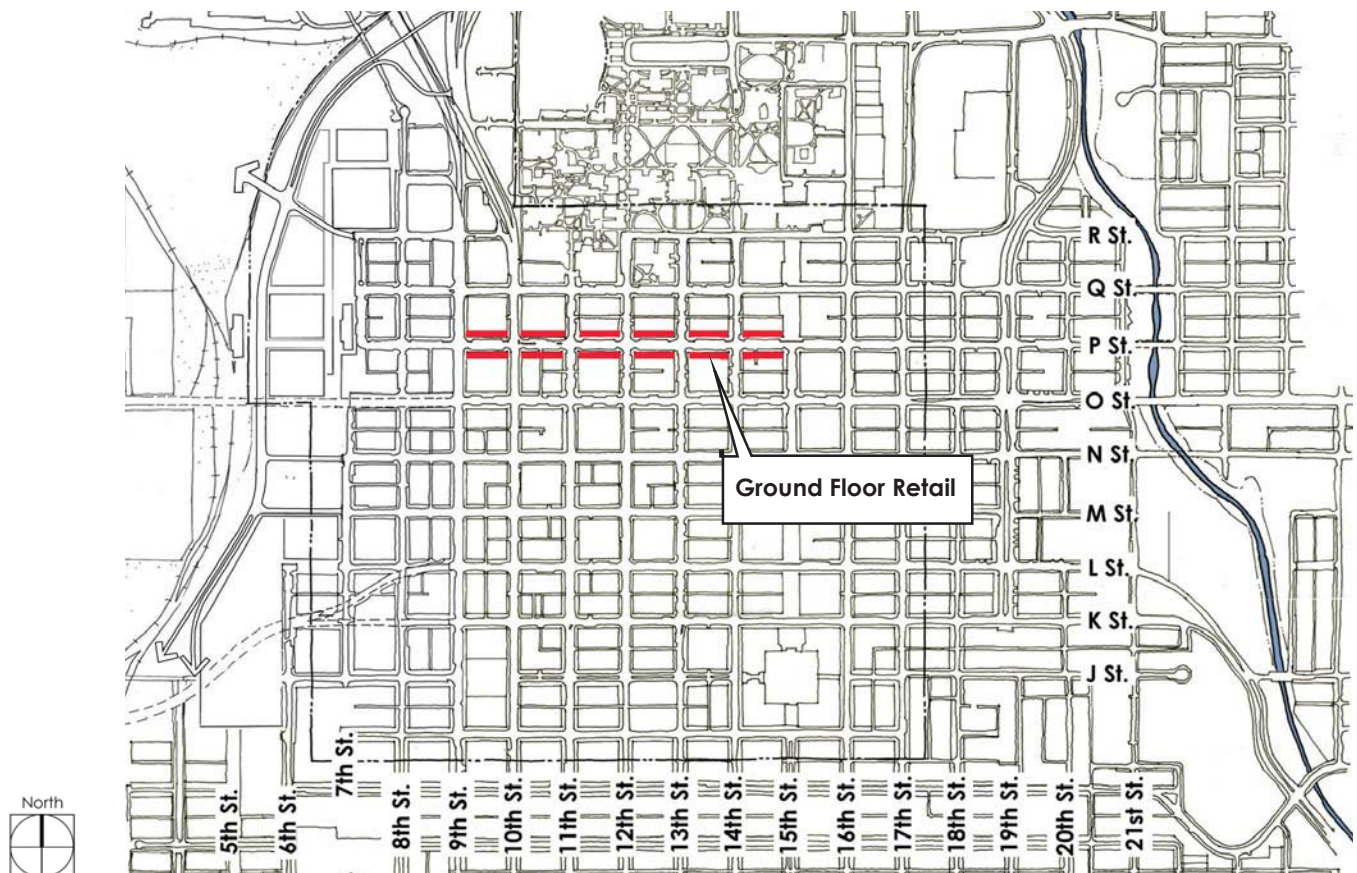
The intent of the Essential Retail Development Standards is to establish a template that prescribes only those requirements that are *necessary* to create a competitive, whole and integrated retail development:

- Required Ground Floor Retail
- Build-to Lines
- Active Edges

These requirements must be adhered to *rigorously in the primary retail core*, and at least moderately adhered to in the secondary retail area. Descriptions of each requirement follows.

Required Ground Floor Retail

Successful retail streets are not interrupted by inappropriate uses. To maintain a vibrant retail atmosphere, continuous edge-to-edge storefronts are required. Inappropriate uses that disrupt the retail corridor should be discouraged.

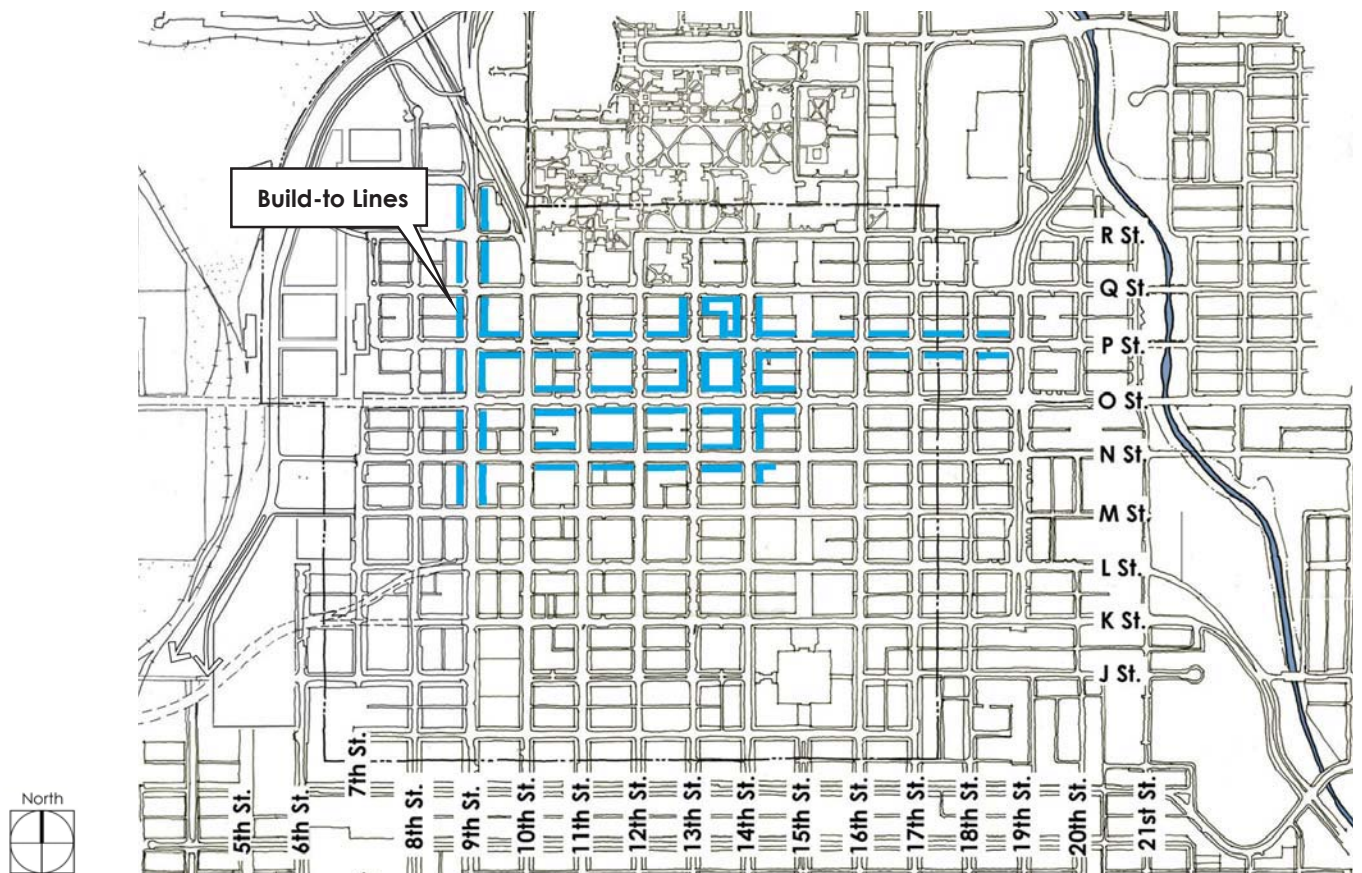


Ground Floor Retail Diagram

Build-to Lines

Consistent minimum setbacks along the street will create a “street wall” and provide a comfortable sense of enclosure for the pedestrian.

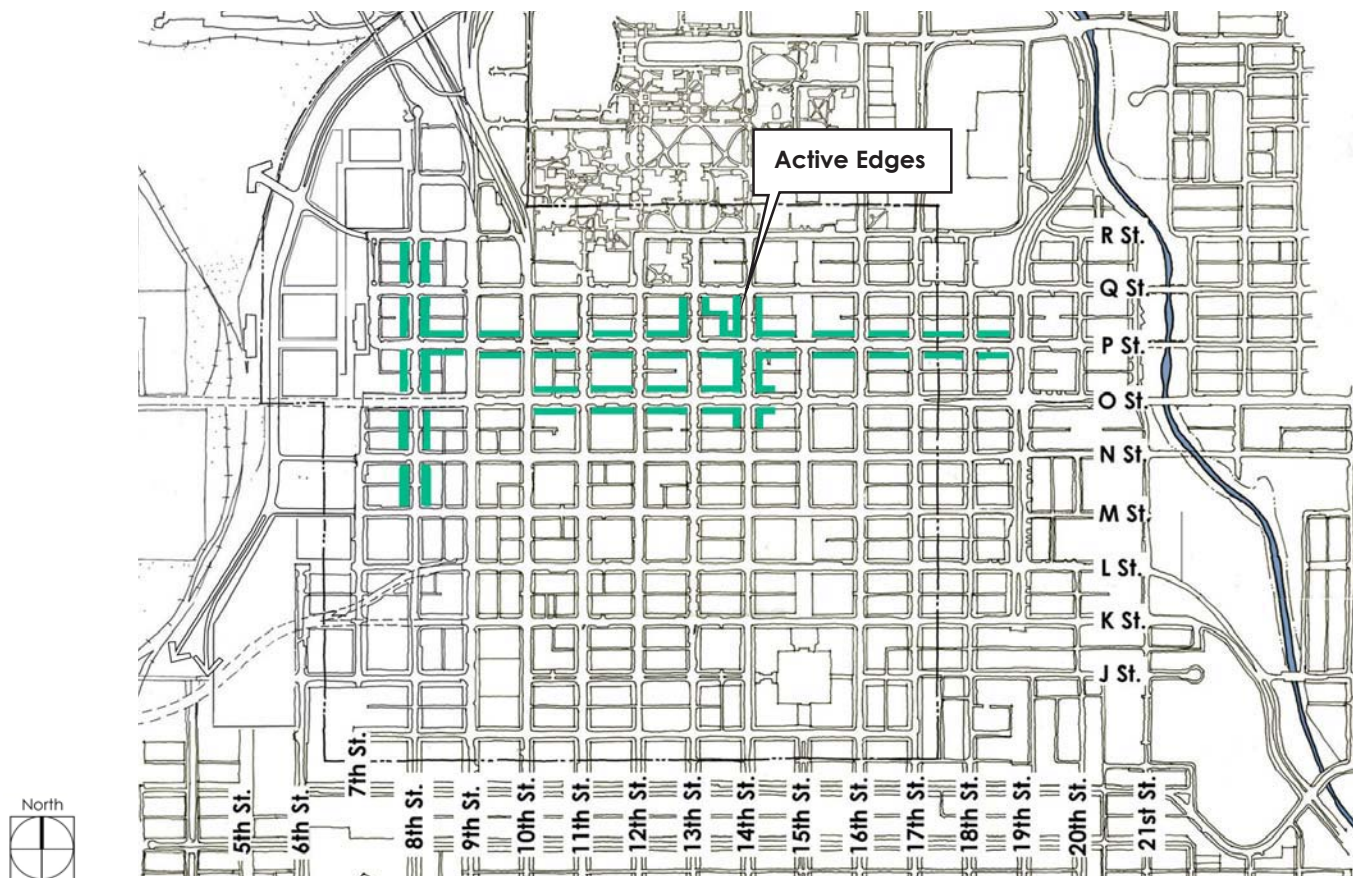
- Construct buildings up to the right-of-way line.
- Prohibit forecourts, gardens or other setbacks.

*Build-to Lines Diagram*

Active Edges

Focus building activity at street level to animate the public realm and provide a sense of security for pedestrians both day and night. To create active edges:

- **Front doors** – should face the street or public spaces.
- **Retail ground floor openings** (windows and doors) – should comprise a minimum of 75% of the building's front facade.
- **Ground floor retail windows and doors** – should open to views in and out of the building without obstructions (tinted or obscured glass).
- **Curb cuts** (into parking lots or structures) – should generally be minimized and located at mid-block.



Active Edges Diagram